

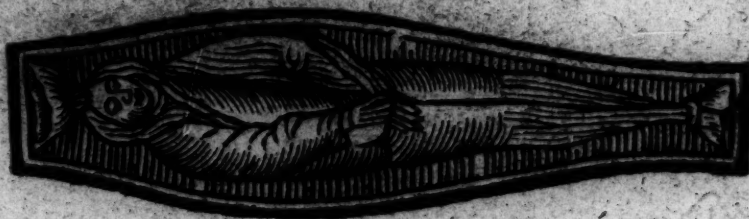
Henry 5th 1417

A seasonable
PREPARATION
FOR
Death and Eternity:
OR,
FUNERAL Considerations, &c.

Being the Substance of a
DISCOURSE

Occasionally on the Death of
The D. of G-----, a Noble Peer,
Who received his mortal Wound at the Siege of
CORK in **IRELAND**.

With a PRAYER suitable to the Occasion.



[Licensed according to Order.]

Printed for *P. Brooksby, J. Deaton, J. Blare, J. Back,*

PREPARATION
FOR
Death and Eternity:
OR
THE GREAT COMMISSION

COURSE



The Board of Missions
Who received the annual Warrant at the
General Assembly
Held at London, 1744



Printed for J. Baskin, at the
Printers Office, in the Strand

**A Seasonable
Preparation for Death and Eternity :**

O R,

**FUNERAL Considerations
laid down,**

**In the Uncertainty of Man's Life; and the various
Chances and Misfortunes that attend us in our
Progress through this World to the Heavenly Jeru-
salem ; and what a necessity of an early Repentance
is required, and the danger of the least Delay in
the Contemplation of Mortality and Unsecurity, &c.**

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Pfalm 39. 5.

Behold thou hast made my days as a span long, and my Age as nothing before thee, &c.

IF we truly consider the short duration of Life; and the many Calamities that attend it; we cannot but conclude that Riches, Honour and Prosperity are but frail things and all the Glories of Life are compared to the most fading and transitory things, considering neither strength, beauty, wisdom, or power, can secure them from the various Chances that attend Mortality. This occasioned Authors to compare them to things that are exceeding momentary, things that may be said to vanish almost as soon as they appear: Some have compared the Life of Man to a Bubble, alluding therein, That the World is but a storm, and Men rise up in their several Generations like a Bladder of Water filled with Air, and some of these sink into the Deluge of their first Parents, and are hidden in a sheet of Water, having no other Business in the World, but to be born that they may be able to dye; others perhaps float up and down for a while, and suddenly disappear, there being no certainty of a lasting Life, however Man may flatter himself; therefore we ought always so to live as if we were on the brink of the Grave; for those that live longest continue but in a restless motion; or, alluding to our first *Simile* of the frailty of a mortal State, those that continue longest dancing on the surface of the Water, are at last crushed with a drop from a Cloud into flatness; so Man coming into the World, if he spring up, and grow gay, to the Joy of many, he is notwithstanding, exposed to innumerable hazards and chances,

cess, and in the end turned into Dust; for all earthly power
 and glory must set at length in the Grave, and no Man adds
 a moment to his Life beyond the Will of that God that
 gave it; in whose hands is all the Breath of Life, and in
 whose power it is to do whatsoever pleaseth him; for altho'
 for a time the young Man may flourish like the flower of the
 Field, and shine, as it is termed, like a Doves neck, or the
 Image of the Rainbow, which borrows its glorious Colours
 from the Sun by Reflection, yet one thing or other frequent-
 ly interrupts his Felicity; for as we find it *Psalm 39. Man*
walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he
beapesth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them: so that
 we cannot promise to our selves no certain assurance, Sick-
 ness, Casualty, War, and many other things, give us a Pas-
 port to another World; but here lies the main stress, so to
 live that we need not at any time be afraid to dye; for he
 that lives unto Christ, for him to dye is gain: *I am, says he,*
the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though
he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth & believeth
in me he shall never dye, John 11, 25. 26. this is the hidden Man-
 na and Water of Life, that nourishes us to Eternity, and
 puts us beyond the fear of Death, unstinging, or disarming
 even the King of Terrors, and renders us capable of out-
 facing him in his most affrighting shapes. *I know (says holy*
Joh) that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the
latter day upon the Earth; and though after my skin worms destroy
this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for my
self, and mine Eyes shall behold and not anothers. Job 19, 25, 26,
 27. here is the glorious Hope of a Christian, whereby he
 triumphs in his Death, and puts him beyond all possibility of
 fear, notwithstanding the brittle Foundation of a mortal
 Life, which *Homer* calls a Leaf, the smallest and weakest part
 of a short-lived and unsteady Plant; and *Pindar* terms it the
 Dream of a shadow; another the Dream of the shadow of
 Smoke; but *St. James*, who spoke by a more excellent Spi-
 rit, says, *our Life is but a Vapour*; and that is a thin Matter
 drawn from the Earth by a Coelestial Influence, made of
 Smoke, or the lighter parts of Water, tossed by every Wind
 and

and moved by the motion of a superiour Body, without power in it self, lifted up on high, or left below; a mere *Phænomena*, like the shadow that departeth, or the Tale that is told; or like the Dream when one awaketh: what then should move us to hope the laying up a Security upon Earth, since here we are but Pilgrims and Strangers, and have no tarrying City, but ought to look for one not made with hands, in the highest Heavens. It was usual amongst the wise Men of past Ages to order their being put in mind of Mortality, even in the midst of their most joyfull Entertainments; as having the Skulls and Skeletons of Men presented at their Feasts; and at the Coronation of the Emperours of *Constantinople*, a Mason presented them with a Model of their Tombs, to let them know in the midst of their Glory and Grandeur they were but mortal Men: *We brought (says Job) nothing into the World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the Name of the Lord:* this is our only Reliance in Life and Death, God is sure and certain to those trust in him; if we dye in our Beds, or in the Field, whether our Graves be made in our Mother Earth, from whence we were originally taken, or in the watry Womb of the Sea, whether we are laid up in the Repositories of the Dead, amongst Peasants, all is one in the Morning of the Resurrection, all is one, if we have a sure Interest in Christ, who is the Resurrection, and the Life of those that in Faith rely on him: *For now (says St. Paul) is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first Fruits of them that slept;* as we find it in the 15th. of the 1 Epistle to the *Corinthians*: *For as in Adam (continues he) all dyed, so in Christ shall all be made alive;* but every Man in his own Order, Christ the first Fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Since then our Lives are so uncertain, how precious then ought our time to be, and what a value should we set upon it, seeing it is given us to barter with Heaven for Eternal Life and Glory, and that the least moment, when relapsed, cannot be recalled, but winds off the Thread of Life, continually digging our Graves; every Revolution which the Sun makes about the World, divides between Life and Death,
and

and Death possesses both the Portions by the next Morrow; and we are dead to all those Moments which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again, and still God makes little periods of our Age : First we change one World, when we come from the Womb to feel the warmth of the Sun, then we sleep, and enter into the Image of Death, in which State we are unconcerned, and so wear away till we drop into the Grave, which is sure to claim its right, as well of the Mighty as the Feeble; the Great and Noble alike lye down in the Dust; Kings and their Progeny are here levelled, and it is only their good Actions and Fame can survive them, and blossom like the Rod of *Aron*, after they are withered and crumbled into Atoms.

When thou (says the Psalmist) dost chasten Man for his Sin, thou makest his Beauty to consume away, like as it were a Moth fretting a Garment : Thus we see, and may seriously consider the frailty of Life, which may serve to put us in mind, that Noble and Illustrious Persons, though sprung from Kings, having Royal Bloud streaming in their Veins are subject to the stroke of Fate; though undoubtedly none fall without the Divine permission. So teach us then, O Lord, to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.

When *Alexander* by his Courage and Success had over-run in Conquest a great part of the World, no force or power of conquering Armies were able to Shield him from the stroke of Death. *Seeing Man cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth; as it were in one stay; in the midst of life we are in Death: Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our Sins art justly displeased.*

It is in the Lord above that we ought to have confidence, in this case; for he it is that shall raise us up at the last day, and shall preserve our Souls alive; the glorious Captain of our Salvation has already overcome Death and the power of the Grave; and although that be the last Enemy, he shall utterly destroy, yet has he already taken away his Sting, so that he cannot be terrible to those that are in Christ; for his Office to them is friendly, only to set the Soul at Liberty by unlocking the Door of the Body; for this corruptible must put on

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incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality; and then shall be brought to pass the Saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in Victory: O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory? the Sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ: therefore my beloved Brethren be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know your Labour is not vain in the Lord.*

However, let us watch and pray, least we enter into Temptation; let us so run the Race that is set before us, that we may win the Crown of Life and Glory, and not loiter away our time, pretending with the Sluggard, that there is a Lion in the way; nor sleep secure like the foolish Virgins, without being prepared with Oil in our Lamps, till the Cry of the coming of the Bridegroom be heard; let us rather consider we should be diligent and watchfull, and that every Meal we eat is no less than a Rescue from Death, and lays up for another, and whilst we think a Thought Time passes away, and the Clock strikes, and reckons on our Portion, and shows us that our Life is but Vanity, and that we are posting, and so much nearer to Eternity; we form our Words with the Breath of our Nostrils, and we have the less to live upon, for every Word we speak.

Thus Nature calls us to meditate on Death by those things that are instrumental of acting it; and God, by the variety of his Providence, makes us see Death every where, in all variety of Circumstances, dressed up for all the Fancies and the Expectations of every single Person. Nature hath given us one Harvest every year, but Death hath two, old and young, ripe and unripe, fall by his impartial Hand; it meets us every where, and is procured by every Instrument, and all Chances; entering in at many Doors by violence or secret influence; in the Bed of Honour, or in an easie Bed of Down, and this ought to be before Eyes; For (as a Father says) if we seriously meditate on our Deaths, and the day of Judgment, we should never do amiss; for then it would keep an Awe and Reverence upon our Minds to live as we expected to dye, and appear before the Tribunal of the tremendous God of all the Earth: Cast thy Burthen upon the Lord, (says the Psalmist)

and

and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the Righteous to be moved; there is no refuge from Death and the Grave; then all the shelter we can propose is to fly to God, who is Lord of Life and Death, appealing from his Justice to his Mercy, and humbling our selves at his Foot-stool and say, [Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, shut not thy mercifull Ears unto our Prayers; let us not be overcome with the fear of Death, nor slight its terrors even in the day of Prosperity; least we deceive our own Souls; for if we put far away the evil day, it may suddenly overtake us unprepared:] Nor is it all times in our power to repent; God's Spirit will not always strive with Man, and if he withdraw his Grace, we are of all Creatures the most miserable; and therefore whilst it is so day let us hear his Voice, summoning us to our latter end; and though we are strong, and in Health, living at ease, or encompassed with Friends, yet we are uncertain how long we have to live, and indeed the longest Life is too short for a sincere and worthy Repentance to Eternal Life: for though we be never so watchful over our selves, some Temptations will prevail; some Sins more than we able to resist will be chasing with us; our Bones are full of the Sins of our Youth, and they will, as the Scripture says, *lye down with us in the Dust*: The Glory and Beauty of Man may be in this Life compared to a Rose for its duration; for so we see that fragrant Flower springing from the Clefts of its Bud, and at first it was fair as the Morning, and filled with the Dew of Heaven, as a Lambs Fleece; but when a ruder Breath has forced open its Virgin Modesty, and dismantled its too youthfull and unripe Retirements, it becomes sullied, and begins to put on Darkness, and to decline to softness, and the Symptoms of a sickly Age, and then sheds its Leaves, and fades away: even so is the State of Life, which is attended by innumerable Casualties; as we see the brave and valiant, that, if it was possible, would out-face the King of Terrors and trample upon his gloomy Dominion, are nevertheless subject to his stroke; he sends a Bullet in War with a Commission to summons the most undaunted Spirit to yield himself a Captive to the Grave, and this fatally executes it Errand, and will have no denial, snatching as soon the Darling of a King-

dom, as the meanest Slave; or perhaps a thrust with a Sword, or a Pike, may effect as much; Death has innumerable ways to seize our Breath; on him a thousand Diseases wait, like so many destroying Angels, to prey upon our Lives, and hurry us into the silent Dust, and so to Eternity, never to return more to our Houses, Possessions, or Relations, in an Estate of enjoying temporal things; for neither Youth, Riches, or Beauty will profit in the Grave; Kings, and the Sons of Kings must mingle in the Regions of Death; as we see frequent Instances abroad and at home; no power, nor might, nor riches, or honour, can prevent it; for though they are termed Gods on Earth, yet nothing can hinder, but they must at one time or other, when the great and wise disposer of all things thinks fit, dye like Men, and then it is the Voice that Saint John heard can bring them comfort: *I heard (says he) a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their Labour, Rev. 14. 13.* This is a blessed Change to leave a troublesome World for a place of transcendent Joy and Felicity, where flow the Rivers of Life, and an eternal Spring of Blessedness remains; where Crowns of Life and Glory are to be had; incorruptible Crowns that cannot fade nor have end, the thoughts of which should be enough to raise our Spirits with a longing desire after Christ and his Kingdom; and with St. Paul, to dye daily to Sin, that we may live unto Righteousness; that so without fear we may look Death steadfastly in the Face, and desire to be dissolved, that our Souls, with holy David, may pant and thirst after God, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brook. This is the only way to conquer Death that conquers all; so that although sorrow should happen for a Night, joy will assuredly come in the morning; here indeed we are in a Vale of Tears, but there we shall be in a Paradise of everlasting Pleasure; and think Death friendly in setting us free; when we shall find, as the wise Man says, *A good name is better than precious Ointment*; and the day of Death than the day of ones Birth; it is better to go to the House of Mourning than to go to the House of Feasting; for that is the end of all Men, and the Living will lay it to his Heart, *Eccles. 7. 12.* so that we see,

(LET)

O let us consider these things, and work whilst it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man worketh; that is the night of the Grave and Darkness, from whence we can only expect a bright Morning of the Resurrection, that will make us amends for all the various Misfortunes of this Life, even when the Trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruptible; and this mortality must put on immortality; so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortality shall have put on immortality, then (and not till then) shall be brought to pass the Saying, Death is swallowed up in Victory: O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory: The which that we may all find, and so be happy, we implore for the sake of him that has overcome Death and triumphed victoriously, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who is become the first Fruits of those that are risen, and has given us a sure Earnest of the Resurrection to Life everlasting, Amen.

A. Pray

F I N I S

A Prayer suitable to the Occasion.

O Most Glorious Lord God, in whom alone is the power of Life and Death, on whom our being and well-being depends; teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts to Wisdom; we confess, O Lord, most mercifull Father of Spirits, that by reason of our many Sins we are unworthy so much as to lift up our Eyes unto thee, but thou hast commanded us to humble our selves before thee, that thy Wrath and Indignation may not sit heavy upon us; for when thou art angry, all our days are gone, we bring our years to an end, as it were a Tale that is told: Keep us, O Lord, we beseech thee in the way of Uprightness, and save us from sudden Death, that through fear or surprize our Faith may not fail; but that we may have a steadfast reliance on thy Mercy at all times in Peace and War, through Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour, Amen. 18 JA 53

F I N I S.

